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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 15 of Security Council resolution 2047 (2012), in which the Council requested that I continue to inform it at 60-day intervals of progress in the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), and continue to bring to its attention any serious violations of the 20 June 2011 Agreement between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area. The present report also provides an update on progress made in the tasks mandated to UNISFA under Council resolution 2024 (2011) related to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. In addition, the report provides an update on the situation in Abyei and on the deployment and operations of UNISFA since my previous report on the matter (S/2012/175), issued on 23 March 2012.

II. Security situation

2. During the reporting period, the security situation in the Abyei Area remained calm but unpredictable, owing to tensions associated with the continued presence of unauthorized armed forces in the Area, in violation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement, the parties' failure to establish the Abyei Area Administration, the large-scale migration of Misseriya nomads and the gradual return of displaced Ngok Dinka. The security situation was also affected by the conflict on the border between the Sudan and South Sudan.

3. As at 15 May 2012, the 400- to 500-strong Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudan Police Service remained present north of the Kiir/Bahr el-Arab River, in Abyei town, Goli, Baloom and the Diffra area. UNISFA continued to monitor and verify the compliance of the Sudanese Armed Forces with the mission's request that they restrict their movement to north of Abyei town, to daytime hours and to the main road and that they refrain from carrying out any operational tasks.

4. The escalation of the border conflict between the Sudan and South Sudan during the reporting period was followed by several security incidents inside the Abyei Area. On 31 March, UNISFA observed an aircraft entering the airspace over the Abyei Area from the north-east by way of Dumboloya. The aircraft proceeded south and circled twice over Tejalei, before heading back north and dropping four

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bombs approximately 1 to 2 km south of the UNISFA company operating base in Um Khariet. One civilian was injured during the incident and was treated for those injuries at the UNISFA compound. The Government of the Sudan took responsibility for the incident and apologized to the mission.

5. On the morning of 13 April, approximately 1,800 soldiers of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) entered the eastern flank of the Abyei Area by way of the Thurpader-Shegag axis from Unity State in South Sudan. UNISFA stopped the force 20 km south-east of Um Khariet and prevented it from proceeding with its stated plan to go to Heglig (in Southern Kordofan State, Sudan) through the Abyei Area. On the same day, the Force's Head of Mission, Lieutenant-General Tadesse Werede Tesfay, travelled to Juba, South Sudan, to request the SPLA High Command to withdraw its troops from the Abyei Area and to refrain from any further action that could endanger the overall security situation. The withdrawal began in the afternoon of the same day and was completed by the morning of 14 April. Furthermore, on 19 April UNISFA stopped 22 members of SPLA near Cwein in the south-eastern part of the Abyei Area and redirected them to Unity State, South Sudan.

6. On 15 April, approximately 300 elements of the Popular Defence Forces (PDF) militia entered the Abyei Area from the direction of El Muglad in Southern Kordofan State, Sudan. The force stopped in the Mekines area, north-east of the Diffra oil complex in northern Abyei. On 17 April, the militia forces reached approximately 6,000 elements, of whom an estimated 2,000 were armed. Following the engagement by UNISFA with the Government of the Sudan and PDF elements on the ground, all militia elements withdrew from the Abyei Area by 18 April. However, UNISFA observed that a number of youths associated with PDF who were residents of the Abyei Area simply returned to their villages. On 19 April, UNISFA stopped the unauthorized movement of 45 members of the Sudanese Armed Forces near Dahilop in central Abyei and redirected them northward. On 29 April, a UNISFA patrol team reported the sighting of 77 youths carrying new AK-47 rifles in Kadama in the border area between the Abyei Area and Unity and Warrap States in South Sudan. The youths immediately withdrew from the area in accordance with the mission's request.

7. In accordance with the African Union Peace and Security Council road map of 24 April 2012, the Government of South Sudan withdrew its police from the Abyei Area on 10 May. With the logistical support of UNISFA, some 700 elements of the South Sudan Police Service relocated to Mayen Abun and Ajak Kuac in Twic County, Warrap State, South Sudan. At a ceremony held on the same day, while officially announcing the withdrawal of the South Sudan Police Service from the Abyei Area, the South Sudanese Inspector-General of Police ordered Police Service officers to refrain from visiting their families in the Abyei Area in uniform and with weapons. SPLA continued to maintain its brigade headquarters in Mijan Kol, approximately 3 km south of Agok and the Abyei Area boundary, as established on 9 November 2011.

8. As at 15 May, the Misseriya had begun to move back north with millions of cattle from water sources and grazing lands in the Abyei Area and Unity State in South Sudan. The reverse movement northward has thus far proceeded in a peaceful and orderly fashion. A common threat during the reverse migration in the Abyei Area has been the presence of cattle raiders. On 14 May, UNISFA arrested, disarmed

and recovered stolen Ngok Dinka cattle from 46 suspected cattle raiders in the vicinity of Rhadiya, Um Khariet and Danga.

9. In the light of the deteriorating security situation in Unity State and the relative security provided by UNISFA inside the Abyei Area, the Misseriya reverse migration began earlier than usual in 2012. Early in May, the nomads were forced to resort to gain access to water and grazing land in the south-eastern part of the Abyei Area that are inhabited primarily by Ngok Dinka. In this connection, during the reporting period more than 4,000 displaced persons from Abiemnom County in Unity State, South Sudan, relocated to Rumamier, also in the south-eastern part of the Abyei Area.

10. In order to prevent intercommunal violence, UNISFA continued to engage with Misseriya and Ngok Dinka community leaders with respect to the need to desist from any provocative or hostile action that could disrupt the peaceful and orderly migration of nomads and return of displaced persons. The Force's ability to prevent local clashes was enhanced by its full deployment, an increase in its day and night patrols to an average of 80 per day, the maintenance of checkpoints and the work of joint security committees, bringing together UNISFA officers and local community leaders.

11. During the reporting period, the United Nations Mine Action Service, its contracted teams and a UNISFA demining platoon continued operations in support of both UNISFA and the work of humanitarian agencies. The multitasking teams of the Service continued the removal of explosive remnants of war in villages abandoned during the May 2011 conflict. The main effort was focused on the clearance of health facilities, schools and water points in order to ensure the safety of inhabitants and humanitarian agencies working in those locations. To date, all villages along the Banton-Rumamier, Abyei-Marial Achak, Wanchuk-Dokura and Todach-Kuthakou roads, as well as Galar, Piuk and Mading, have been cleared. The UNISFA demining platoon concentrated its efforts on the former SPLA camps of Noong, Tejalei and Todach around which both anti-personnel and anti-tank mines were found. Work has not begun in Abyei town itself, which involves the clearance of more than 7 million square metres.

12. Subsequent to a mine incident that occurred on 20 March, which destroyed a UNISFA truck but caused no casualties, two routes north of Tejalei were closed for movement. This did not affect access to Tejalei itself or any other village, as other routes remained available. Despite this incident, the United Nations Mine Action Service has determined that mines and unexploded ordnance would not impede mission or humanitarian activities, even though a residual threat remains.

III. Political developments

13. The final status of the Abyei Area remains to be resolved, and very little progress was made during the reporting period on the implementation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement. Furthermore, owing to the continued clashes and tensions between the two countries, the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee, to date the only functioning body envisaged under the 20 June Agreement, did not meet. The fourth meeting of the Committee, which was rescheduled for 12 April, was postponed for the third time at the request of the Government of the Sudan, which cited security concerns following the outbreak of the border conflict. The African Union facilitator of the

Committee continued consultations with the parties in order to determine a date for the fourth meeting.

14. While the plenary session of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism scheduled for 30 March was delayed as a result of the border clashes, the parties met at the ministerial level in Addis Ababa on 4 April. On that occasion, the African Union High-level Implementation Panel presented to the two Governments a six-point "joint decision for the reduction of tension between the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan". The proposed decision was aimed at reaffirming the parties' commitment to continue negotiations in a spirit of cooperation and partnership, as agreed during the most recent round of negotiations, on 7 March. It committed the parties to immediately cease hostilities, resume negotiations in good faith and implement all previous agreements and decisions of the Mechanism, including the memorandum of understanding on non-aggression and cooperation signed in Addis Ababa on 10 February. It also committed the parties to immediately activate the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. While South Sudan indicated its readiness to sign the proposal, the Government of the Sudan stated that it would need to engage in further consultations in Khartoum before signing it.

15. With regard to the new mandated tasks of UNISFA to support the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, the clashes on the border between the Sudan and South Sudan, including bombardments by the Sudanese Armed Forces and the occupation of Heglig by SPLA, impeded the implementation of the Agreement between the Government of the Sudan and the Government of South Sudan on Border Security and the Joint Political Security Mechanism of 29 June 2011 and the Agreement on the Border Monitoring Support Mission between the Government of the Sudan and the Government of South Sudan of 30 July 2011.

IV. Status of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism

16. In view of the critical security situation on the border between the Sudan and South Sudan, UNISFA continued preparations for the expedited implementation of its mandate to support the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2024 (2011). UNISFA and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in collaboration with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, conducted a technical survey mission on 4 and 5 April. The technical survey covered Renk, Palaug, Melut, Thar Jath and Bentiu. The survey mission identified the main operational requirements with regard to engineering, movement control, aviation, supply lines, ground transportation, communications and security.

17. Because of the urgency of activating the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, the Government of Ethiopia agreed to the UNISFA proposal that the locality of Assosa, Ethiopia, be used as a temporary headquarters for the Mechanism. This arrangement would permit the immediate operationalization of the Mechanism pending agreement by the parties on outstanding issues, namely, the permanent headquarters of the Mechanism, the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone and the reference map. The staff and logistical resources deployed in Assosa would gradually be redeployed to the agreed Mechanism sites. On 6 and 7 May, the Head of Mission travelled to Khartoum and Juba to impress upon Sudanese and South

Sudanese officials the need to ensure the expeditious deployment of their national monitors, to approve the list of international monitors and to grant them the necessary visas.

V. Humanitarian situation

18. The majority of the more than 110,000 Ngok Dinka who fled their homes in the Abyei Area remain displaced and reluctant to return to their villages owing to the continued presence of unauthorized armed forces from the Sudan and the lack of food assistance and work opportunities. Nevertheless, the gradual return of displaced Ngok Dinka to the Abyei Area continued during the reporting period. UNISFA reported that as at 1 May, more than 6,000 displaced Ngok Dinka had returned to their villages in the Abyei Area, as far north as Abyei town, Wunrok, Dungoup, Tejalei and Marial Achak. Of these, 200 returned to Abyei town during the reporting period. UNISFA observed returnees preparing their lands for farming during the rainy season in a number of areas. United Nations agencies were unable to verify returns in most parts of the Abyei Area. However, as noted, access is gradually improving owing to demining efforts. Humanitarian assistance to displaced Ngok Dinka continued, focusing mainly on the Agok area and neighbouring Warrap State in South Sudan.

19. In April, 112,000 displaced persons were provided with a monthly food ration by the World Food Programme (WFP) and its partners in the Abyei Area and Warrap State. Through its partners, WFP carried out exercises for the verification of displaced persons in the areas around Agok from 16 to 20 April and in Warrap State, South Sudan, from 23 to 26 April. Stocks to support the population during the months of July to September were being pre-positioned at three locations in the Abyei Area and at five others in Warrap State.

20. Meanwhile, humanitarian partners provided tents to the communities during the reporting period, while UNISFA provided water. Water, sanitation and hygiene partners carried out needs assessments in Abyei town and distributed soap as part of their hygiene promotion activities. Health partners continued to provide services and nutrition support through mobile clinics to villages north of the Kiir/Bahr el-Arab River. Food security and livelihood partners distributed seeds and agricultural tools to approximately 15,000 people in villages surrounding Agok. In Abyei town and the northern part of the Abyei Area, water, sanitation and hygiene partners such as the International Organization for Migration rehabilitated boreholes and water yards to secure a water supply for the Misseriya nomads and their cattle. Humanitarian agencies also assisted persons in Rumamier displaced from Unity State, South Sudan, by providing health services and non-food items. United Nations Children's Fund partners in the area continued to register separated children and to conduct family tracing.

VI. Protection of civilians

21. UNISFA continued to implement its multifaceted strategy for the protection of civilians, which is designed to secure the peaceful and orderly migration of nomads and return of displaced persons while supporting and directing the work of the joint security committees. It consists of monitoring and early warning assessments, the

conduct of day and night patrols, the promotion of intercommunity dialogue at the local level, reconciliation involving Misseriya and Ngok Dinka traditional leaders to prepare for the planned conferences on peaceful coexistence, and interaction with Sudanese and South Sudanese Government officials.

22. The Head of Mission also continued to engage local authorities in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, Unity and Warrap States to facilitate the peaceful and orderly migration of the Misseriya into South Sudan. On 8 and 9 April, he met the Governors of the three States to discuss the critical need to facilitate the access of the Misseriya to water and grazing lands in those States, to prepare for their return northward and to promote intercommunity dialogue. In order to avoid possible incidents during the reverse migration northward, UNISFA has developed and implemented its strategy designed to facilitate a peaceful and orderly reverse migration. As part of the strategy, UNISFA engaged with local communities on the issue and identified potential cattle raiders and other possible spoilers of the process.

23. During the reporting period, a significant concern relating to the protection of civilians was the ongoing border conflict between the Sudan and South Sudan and a possible spillover into the Abyei Area. In addition to the aerial bombardment carried out near Um Khariet on 31 March and SPLA and PDF incursions into the Abyei Area, the local population in Agok expressed its concern to UNISFA regarding ongoing aerial bombardment in neighbouring Unity State. In order to mitigate the increased risk of intercommunal clashes and any possible spillover into the Abyei Area, UNISFA put in place a series of preventive measures. These included strong political engagement with relevant Sudanese and South Sudanese authorities in order to secure their commitment to refrain from any action likely to endanger the overall security situation in the Abyei Area and to withdraw their remaining forces, and strong engagement with Misseriya and Ngok Dinka community leaders to impress upon them the need to desist from any action likely to trigger intercommunity conflict. Furthermore, UNISFA closely monitored the movement of unauthorized armed groups with a view to preventing incursions into the Abyei Area, disarmed local individuals or groups found to be carrying weapons and reinforced its military presence, especially through the repositioning of its troops.

24. There were no further developments with regard to the operationalization of human rights monitoring in the Abyei Area, as provided for in paragraph 10 of resolution 1990 (2011), during the reporting period.

VII. Deployment of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

25. As at 1 May, the military component of UNISFA comprised 3,881 of the authorized 4,200 troops (see annexes I and II to the present report). The remaining 319 were earmarked for deployment within the UNISFA aviation unit and the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. In Sector North, the second battalion deployed at company strength to operating bases in Diffra, Todach, Um Khariet and Leu, and with one platoon in Tejalei. In Sector Centre, the first battalion was deployed at company strength to operating bases at Abyei headquarters and in Abyei town and Dungoup and at the platoon level in Noong, Alal and Wunrok. In Sector South, the third battalion was deployed at company strength to operating bases in Agok, Banton, Marial Achak and Athony, and at the platoon level in

Lopong/Luffong, Kolognal and Banton Bridge (see annex II to the present report). Sector North and Sector Centre are reinforced with one tank company and one artillery battery, respectively.

26. Taking into account the ongoing migration in the south-western and eastern parts of the Abyei Area and the return of some displaced persons to north of the Kiir/Bahr el-Arab River, UNISFA, within its available means, covered the vast majority of the Abyei Area and conducted extensive day and night patrols, using armoured personnel carriers to deter threats, and increased its visibility with a view to facilitating peaceful and orderly migration and return. No restrictions on freedom of movement were reported, and the Sudanese Armed Forces, the Sudan Police Service and the South Sudan Police Service displayed a positive posture towards the mission. In order to further increase the visibility of UNISFA and improve its credibility and its deterrent effect, two military utility helicopters were deployed to the mission area on 4 May.

27. Major stumbling blocks with respect to the establishment of the Abyei Police Service remain, owing to a lack of progress on the implementation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement, including the failure to establish the Abyei Area Administration. The establishment of the Abyei Police Service under the Abyei Administration remains an urgent requirement.

VIII. Mission support

28. Following the 3 March decision of the Government of Sudan to grant visas to 28 United Nations civilian staff members and 51 contractors, three United Nations civilian staff travelled to Khartoum on 16 April and obtained their Sudanese resident visas on 17 April. A second group of seven United Nations civilian staff and five contractors travelled to Khartoum on 22 April and received their Sudanese resident visas on 29 April. Furthermore, 33 military observers and 24 staff officers received entry visas and are in the process of being deployed to the mission area.

29. The mission has increased its food storage capacity to enable it to store non-perishable food items for a minimum of three months. However, during the forthcoming rainy season, food will still need to be transported by air from Wau, South Sudan, owing to the annual deterioration in road conditions between Wau and Abyei. This will have a significant impact on air asset tasking and the budget. The contents of nine containers of food that had been held in Port Sudan by the Sudanese authorities since September 2011 perished, and all food items were disposed of in situ.

30. As a result of shortages of staff with critical mission support skills caused in part by the delay in the issuance of Sudanese visas (entry and resident), most of the force elements of UNISFA remain in tented accommodation. Efforts are under way to build as many facilities as possible before the rainy season brings construction to a halt.

IX. Financial implications

31. The General Assembly, by its resolution 66/241, appropriated the amount of $175.5 million for the maintenance of UNISFA for the period from 1 July 2011 to

30 June 2012. The cost of maintaining the mission after 30 June 2012 would be limited to the amounts approved by the Assembly.

32. As at 14 May 2012, unpaid assessed contributions to the special account for UNISFA amounted to $18.8 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at the same date amounted to $1,393.3 million.

33. As at 14 May 2012, reimbursement to the contributing Governments for troop and contingent-owned equipment costs had been made for the periods up to 29 February 2012 and 31 December 2011, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

X. Observations and recommendations

34. Relations between the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan have deteriorated significantly since they agreed to conduct their negotiations in a spirit of cooperation and partnership in March. The fighting on the border dealt a severe blow to the long-standing efforts of both Governments, with the support of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, my Special Envoy and the Force's Head of Mission, aimed at the effective implementation of the 20 June, 28 June and 30 July Agreements.

35. I commend the announcement by the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan of their acceptance of the African Union Peace and Security Council road map of 24 April 2012. I call on both of them to cease hostilities immediately and to seek to resolve all outstanding differences through dialogue and peaceful negotiations, in accordance with the road map and Security Council resolution 2046 (2012) of 2 May.

36. The effective establishment and operationalization of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism is an important tool that the parties must use to build confidence and avoid further violence. I urge both Governments to resolve the outstanding requirements necessary for its activation. Furthermore, once the Mechanism has been activated, its effective functioning will require their continued cooperation in the timely deployment of national monitors and the facilitation of the unhindered movement of all international monitors, including with regard to the issuance of entry and residence visas.

37. The overall fragility of the security situation in the Abyei Area will not improve as long as the Government of the Sudan does not withdraw its forces in accordance with resolution 2046 (2012) and the Peace and Security Council road map. The repeated postponement of the fourth meeting of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee has impeded the significant momentum achieved with the adoption of a number of forward-looking decisions at its third meeting, held on 18 and 19 January 2012. Every effort should be made to hold the fourth meeting without further delay.

38. It is also critical that the Abyei Administration be established without further delay. The absence of the Administration and the Abyei Police Service is creating serious difficulties for UNISFA, which is not mandated to address law-and-order issues or to provide any other services required for the peaceful return of the displaced and movement of the nomads. This poses a particular problem in the Agok area following the withdrawal of the South Sudan Police Service. A similar scenario could also unfold in Abyei town if the increased return of displaced persons follows

the withdrawal of the Sudanese Armed Forces. In order to address this issue, I urge the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan to continue to work closely with the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, as well as with my Special Envoy and the UNISFA Head of Mission, to determine suitable dates for the holding of the next meeting of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee.

39. I commend UNISFA for its continuous engagement with the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities to ensure peaceful and orderly migration and return and to prepare the groundwork for the long-awaited intercommunity dialogue. However, if the dialogue and the reconciliation process are to become incontrovertible realities, it is absolutely essential that the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan extend their full political support for the return and migration processes and take all measures necessary to improve the living conditions of both communities. I urge both Governments to work closely with the relevant humanitarian agencies and UNISFA to define concrete modalities for the facilitation of free and unhindered access for humanitarian workers to all the affected communities in the Abyei Area. Similarly, the two Governments should translate the decisions of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee into concrete action in order to create a forum for regular interaction between the Committee and the Sudan and South Sudan United Nations country teams, and to establish an intergovernmental task force on humanitarian assistance.

40. Finally, I would like to extend my gratitude to the Government of Ethiopia for its unwavering support for UNISFA. I would also like to express my appreciation to my Special Envoy, Haile Menkerios, and to the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, led by Thabo Mbeki, for their sustained efforts to assist the two parties in resolving their persistent differences over the practical modalities for implementing the various agreements that they have signed. Moreover, I would like to extend my gratitude to the Head of Mission, Lieutenant-General Tadesse Werede Tesfay, and the staff of UNISFA for their continued efforts to enhance peace and stability in the Abyei Area, to facilitate the peaceful and orderly return of displaced persons and migration of nomads and to promote durable intercommunity dialogue, often under very difficult conditions.

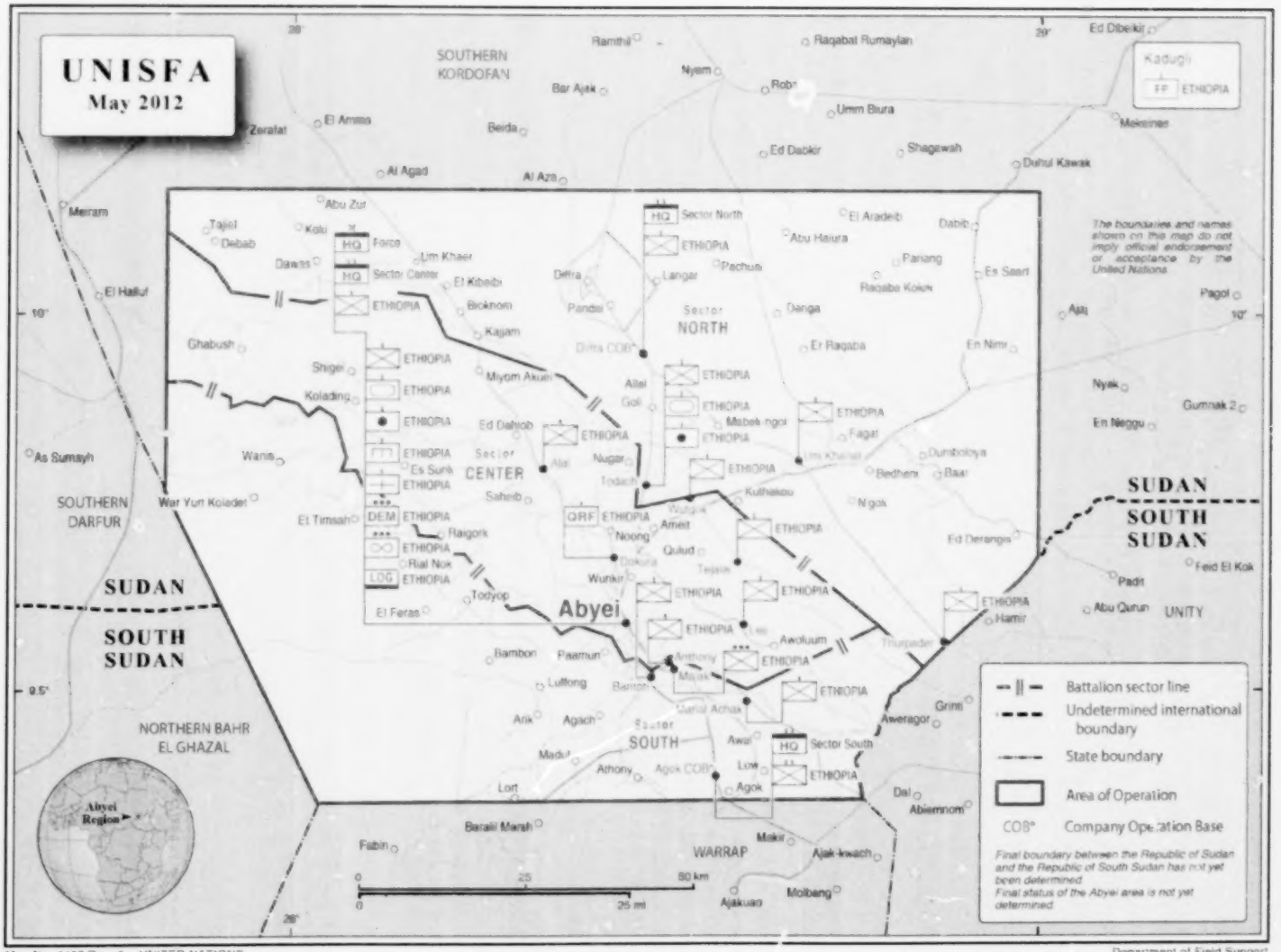
Annex I

Composition of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei military component (including the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism)

Country	*Description*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Benin	Experts on mission	1		1
Bolivia	Experts on mission	1		1
Ethiopia	Experts on mission	147	6	153
	Contingent troop	3 604	199	3 803
Ghana	Experts on mission	1		1
Guatemala	Experts on mission	1		1
India	Experts on mission	2		2
Indonesia	Experts on mission	1		1
Kyrgyzstan	Experts on mission	1		1
Mongolia	Experts on mission	2		2
Nepal	Experts on mission	4		4
Paraguay	Experts on mission	1		1
Peru	Experts on mission	3		3
Philippines	Experts on mission	1		1
Russian Federation	Experts on mission	2		2
Rwanda	Experts on mission	2		2
Sierra Leone	Experts on mission	1		1
Sri Lanka	Experts on mission	2		2
United Republic of Tanzania	Experts on mission	1	1	2
Uruguay	Experts on mission	1		1
Zambia	Experts on mission	1		1
Zimbabwe	Experts on mission	1		1
Total				**3 987**

Annex II

Map of the deployment of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei



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